

CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 13, 2009

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Mayor Healy, Police & Board of Education Officials to Graduate 300 Youth in Gang Resistance Program Jersey City One of First Five Cities Nationwide to Participate in Department of Justice Program

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy, members of the **Municipal Council**, **Police Chief Tom Comey** and **Board of Education** officials will participate in a graduation ceremony for the city’s **G.R.E.A.T.** program at **10 a.m. on Wednesday, January 14, 2009** at **PS #4, 107 Bright Street**.

G.R.E.A.T., which stands for gang resistance education and training, is a program funded through the **U.S. Department of Justice** and is a school-based, law-enforcement officer-instructed classroom curriculum that seeks to education elementary and middle school children about the perils of gang membership and was launched a year ago in Jersey City.

“Jersey City was chosen as one of the first five cities across the nation to participate in this program,” said **Mayor Healy**. “And we have made this program a GREAT success by graduating close to a thousand students and creating recreational opportunities for our youth that provide them with positive outlets.”

According the New Jersey Attorney General’s Office/Commission of Juvenile Justice 46 percent of gang-related incidents occur on school property, which is a reason the

The G.R.E.A.T. curriculum consists of three components: six weeks of elementary school curriculum, a family curriculum and a recreational component, which includes sports, help with homework and other enriching activities. By the end of January, we will have graduated 10 percent of all 4th graders in the Jersey City public school system, which has not been done anywhere else in the country for a city of our size.

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For many years gang prevention has been one of the priorities of the Jersey City Police Department. The G.R.E.A.T. program was created to mitigate delinquency, youth violence, and gang membership. In the effort to accomplish this goal, as well as promote awareness amongst guidance counselors and principals, the Board of Education in conjunction with the Jersey City Police Department, has contracted speakers with expertise in the areas of gangs, violence and communication.

Additionally, the Police Department has created a task force comprised of law enforcement officers from the U.S. Marshals, the Jersey City Police Department, the Hudson County Sheriff's Office, and the Hudson County Department of Corrections. A core group of approximately twenty representatives of law enforcement officials has been comprised to teach G.R.E.A.T. lessons throughout Jersey City.

"When I took office four years ago, I made it one of my top priorities to bring change to the way policing has been done in our city," said **Mayor Healy**. "We have put more police officers on the street, we have instituted tough gun laws and we have utilized CompStat as a crime fighting tool. We also created a Gang Unit and have increased our involvement with the community. The G.R.E.A.T. program complements the work we have done on the street through outreach to the classroom."

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.

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